

Thursday Scholarship Series

FACULTY of MUSIC
UNIVERSITY
of TORONTO

presents

A Program of Twentieth Century Russian Music

March 10, 1977
8:30 pm

with

Melvin Berman, oboe
Douglas Bodle, piano
Steven Dann, viola
Victor Martin, violin
Joel Quarrington, double bass
James Campbell, clarinet
Pierre Souvairan, piano
John Keane, tenor
David Zafer, violin

WALTER HALL
Edward Johnson Bldg.

Program

Sonata for Oboe and Piano (1957)

N. Platonov

Allegro - Andante - Allegro - Andante - Allegro

Melvin Berman, oboe

Pierre Souvairan, piano

Lilacs

Rachmaninoff

The Harvest of Sorrow

"Like blossom dew freshen'd to gladness"

In the Silent Night

John Keane, tenor

Douglas Bodle, piano

Suite Italienne

Igor Stravinsky

Introduzione - Allegro moderato

Serenata - Larghetto

Tarantella - Vivace

Gavotta - con due variazioni

Scherzino - Presto alla breve

Minuetto e finale

Intermission

Preludes, Op. 34

Shostakovich

#1 Moderato - #2 Andante - #3 Allegro - #4 Moderato non
troppo - #7 Allegretto

David Zafer, violin

Pierre Souvairan, piano

Quintet, Op. 39

Prokofiev

Moderato - Andante energico - Allegro sostenuto ma con brio -

Adagio pesante - Allegro precipitato ma non troppo presto -

Andantino

Melvin Berman, oboe; James Campbell, clarinet; Victor Martin, violin;
Steven Dann, viola, Joel Quarrington, double bass.

Program Notes

The Sonata for Oboe and Piano by Platonov is a work that betrays romantic tendencies not only in its full-breathed lines, but also in its use of thematic recurrence. The broad melody of the oboe in the first movement is accompanied throughout by a murmuring sixteenth-note figure in the piano. The contour and rhythm of this melody are brought back in the third Allegro movement, following the lyrical Andante. This latter movement is recalled in the fourth section of the piece, where the piano presents once again its rocking figure in 6/8 time. By this time a change of key has been effected and the work closes with an energetic Allegro in A Major.

The Rachmaninoff Songs present various reflections on life's sorrows and joys, with both Lilacs and In the Silence of the Night projecting a mood of quiet ecstasy as the poet dreams of an absent love. The writing is always lyrical and often impassioned, expressing as it does the heartfelt emotions of the text. Harvest of Sorrow creates a mood of brooding resignation, with its melody supported by strong bass line and forceful harmony. The second song of the Op. 8 set opens with a cascade of seventh chords, and features a sustained lyrical melody over a quietly swaying motif in the piano.

The Suite Italienne is for the most part a free adaptation of the composer's Pulcinella, a ballet originally presented in 1920. The violin and piano version appeared in 1924, with an additional cello-piano arrangement following nine years later. The jubilant introduzione is stylistically reminiscent of the Baroque trio sonata type of writing, although it is somewhat beleaguered by the odd twentieth-century intrusion. The Serenata with its long lyrical lines and quietly pulsing accompaniment is particularly memorable, as is the succeeding rapid Tarantella in a propelling 6/8 rhythm. The stately Gavotte and its two lively variations prepare the way for the breathless Scherzino which immediately evokes the devilish antics of the characters in the *Commedia dell'Arte*. The calm and tune-ful Minuetto provides an introduction for the rambunctious finale which concludes the work in a joyous and untroubled C Major.

The Preludes, Op. 34 of Shostakovich were composed originally for piano solo and were published in 1933. The first prelude presents a recitative-like violin part over a broken triad figure in the piano, and the roles are reversed during the course of the piece. The berceuse-like opening of No. 2 presents a motif which pervades the entire piece in various guises. The third of the set features vivacious passage-work for the violin, in contrast to the lyricism and melancholy of the fourth, the theme of which eventually dissolves into trills. The set concludes with a boisterous waltz-like piece, the melody of which is supported by a sturdy oom-pa-pa figure presented alternately in violin and piano.

The Prokofiev Quintet was composed in 1924 during the composer's stay in Paris. Typically "Prokofian" in many ways, the piece contains tightly regulated thematic material presented with hard-hitting clarity and unflagging rhythmic drive. The opening movement presents an angular folk-like theme with two accompanying variations which, rather than capturing the contours of the original, concentrate on certain fragments of it. The theme returns, at the end. The andante energico opens with a forceful motif in the double bass, fragments of which are repeated with some variations in the other instruments until the final jabbing cadence in C Major. The third movement is a scherzo in 5/4 time, and uses both contrapuntal effects and parallelism. The Adagio pesante is thickly textured, featuring a meandering oboe melody which is gradually adopted by some of the other instruments over a persistent Alberti-bass figure in the viola. About half-way through, the clarinet begins a series of repeated high 'G's, lending an almost nightmarish quality to the whole. However, this mood is dissipated in the succeeding movement, opening as it does with an athletic pizzicato figure in the double bass, which in turn punctuates the playful episodes of the other members of the ensemble. The final movement opens with a lyrical section followed by a contrasting portion which features a lilting dance-like melody. There is a brief reference to the original melody near the end of this second part before the final closing in a quasi-minor key centre.

Dorothy DeVal

Next Event: Thursday Afternoon Series, March 17, 2:10 p.m.,
Walter Hall, David Swan, pianist.